

Small Town* Big Art Project Design Brief

EMDD 670 Creative Lab

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Maui Public Art Corps (MPAC) is an organization dedicated to bolstering cultural and economic growth in Maui County, Hawai'i through events, community collaborations, and art-based initiatives. MPAC is focused on rejuvenating downtown Wailuku, Maui and positioning it as a public arts district with the goal of developing healthy and socially connected citizens through a sense of place, history, and culture. Small Town * Big Art (ST*BA) is a grant-funded creative placemaking project that develops visual and performing arts events and installations such as large murals, artist workshops, digital media, performances, pop-up paint and play days, and more. ST*BA works closely with Hale Hō'ike'ike at the Bailey House, Maui Historical Society (MHS). MHS is an organization with a commitment to preserve and share Maui's rich history through community collaboration. Public art must meet selection criteria related to quality, style, public experience and collaboration in creating the art, significance to Wailuku, and connection with Mary Kawena Pukui's collection of Hawaiian proverbs 'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Political Sayings.

The goal of this project was to implement a storytelling experience which aligns with the vision and mission of ST*BA, MPAC, and MHS. To accomplish this goal, the team designed a digital interactive storytelling experience including questions, locations, and local stories to inspire users to share stories in a fun and engaging way. The experience aims to foster a sense of community among Wailuku residents.



Ball State Cohort - Michaela Tangeman, Ashleigh Goodrich, Lisa Kemp, Erin Salyers, Penelope Baggs, Frank E. Sanabria, Lindsey Overstreet and Raquel Pratas

Industrial development and tourism have been primary drivers for developmental and economic decisions on Maui in the past, leaving local citizens with less of a sense of belongingness.

Through extensive empathy research, the project team found that local artists, businesses, citizens, and ST*BA desire to strengthen their sense of community with shared goals and cultural understanding. Common suggestions included coming together for events such as First Fridays, pot luck dinners, other themed events, or even simple meet-ups at local coffee shops aimed at promoting storytelling, art, culture, and community. Business owners desire involvement and opportunity to promote their businesses while interacting with others in the community.

The team identified and involved the following stakeholders relevant to this project:

- **Wailuku business owners**
- **Maui creatives and artists**
- **Maui Public Art Corps**
- **Wailuku residents**

The project team conducted empathy research with these groups.

Based on key findings, the team established the target age range for this project as Wailuku citizens who are single and aged 18 to 35 and parents with families aged 25 to 45 (see Appendix 1 for personas).

The people of Wailuku desire a stronger sense of belongingness in their own public spaces. This project presents the opportunity to build a stronger sense of community and place through various methods of storytelling. **How might we use storytelling to enhance a sense of community among the residents of Wailuku, Maui County, Hawai'i?**



Figure 1. Small Town * Big Art campaign element

Empathy research uncovered several key findings.

Key findings related to perception:

- The goal of the ST*BA placemaking project is to develop a public arts district in Wailuku and expand it in the future to all of Maui.
- A sense of community is a sense of familiarity and mutual recognition.
- Citizens feel a sense of community when people come together for a shared experience.
- Citizens experience a sense of place when they support one another in the community.
- People want to share their stories with others.
- There is deep meaning in the public art pieces.
- The art projects must involve community consultation.

Key findings related to community wants and needs:

- Local businesses desire involvement and promotion, and ST*BA must allow for equal opportunities.
- Local citizens, regardless of ethnicity, desire culturally diverse representation and involvement to promote a sense of ownership and reflect the community.
- Citizens desire inclusion of shared values: kuleana, pono, aloha, and ohana.
- Residents want to protect the land and resources, so they value and want to promote sustainability.

- Citizens want to use local places, events, and arts as a means for connection and community building.

Key findings related to celebrating history, culture, and land:

- People desire to celebrate local plants and native species.
- Youth need to develop oral storytelling skills and propagate cultural and ancestral knowledge.
- Hawai'i has a rich history of oral storytelling, and people enjoy listening to those stories.
- The culture involves a strong sense of love and respect for each other and the environment (land, water, plants, species).

Initial oral storytelling ideas:

- Come together for a themed event such as First Fridays, farmers market, scavenger hunt, community garden, award celebration (for example, artist, community member, or entrepreneur of the month).
 - Tell stories over food.
 - Allow for confidentiality should some people not want to publicly share their stories.
 - Tell the stories behind the murals.
 - Create prints of the murals along with the stories to provide longevity and spreadability.
 - Involve youth.
 - Partner with local businesses and organizations.
 - Tell stories about local historical places including a possible tour.
-

This project had several constraints:

- Audience - The audience for the project was the citizens of Wailuku. While all are welcomed, the target audience was not tourists.
- Focus - The prescribed focus was to encourage storytelling, keeping in mind that the citizens are not always eager to share, and some feel that their stories are not worthy of sharing.
- Culturally Sensitive - Since the audience is the citizens of Wailuku, it was vital for our team to be empathetic and sensitive to cultural values. It was vital to help move the project forward and not impede the progress while promoting culture, community, and environmental preservation.
- Grant specifications - The ST*BA grant carries specific rules, so the project team stayed within the constraints of the grant and the rules ST*BA established, including equal opportunities for local business involvement, artist ownership of art, and inability to sell products or services.

This project had the following limitations:

- Location - The project is limited to the town of Wailuku. Only one of the team members is physically in Maui. Others joined for a few days during the final testing stage.
- COVID-19 - The pandemic was still a concern. When the project began, Maui hospitals were full, and local government officials were asking non-residents not to visit.
- Time - Our project team worked within the constraints of two school semesters, ensuring that the team executed the project and associated deliverables by early May 2022.

Based on these key findings, the team refined and finalized these questions:

- How might we bring people together and involve Keiki (youth) and Kupuna (elders)?
- How might we preserve culture, history, and environment through oral storytelling?
- How might we involve local businesses including restaurants?
- How might we encourage residents to share stories?
- How might we use storytelling to build and deepen relationships and a sense of community?

The team, with input from the project partner, established that the project must have the following elements:

- Oral storytelling
- Celebration of the place
- Community involvement and bringing people together
- Capturing and spreading of stories

The design focus was an interactive storytelling experience involving physical and digital cards with different activities including story prompt questions, listening to stories, sharing stories, and visiting local places. The experience relates to the following values: diversity, legacy, tradition, protection, hope, kuleana (responsibility), and belonging. The following physical cards were distributed at Wailuku businesses.

The team created a low-fidelity design of several interactive storytelling topics as part of an adventure-based experience.

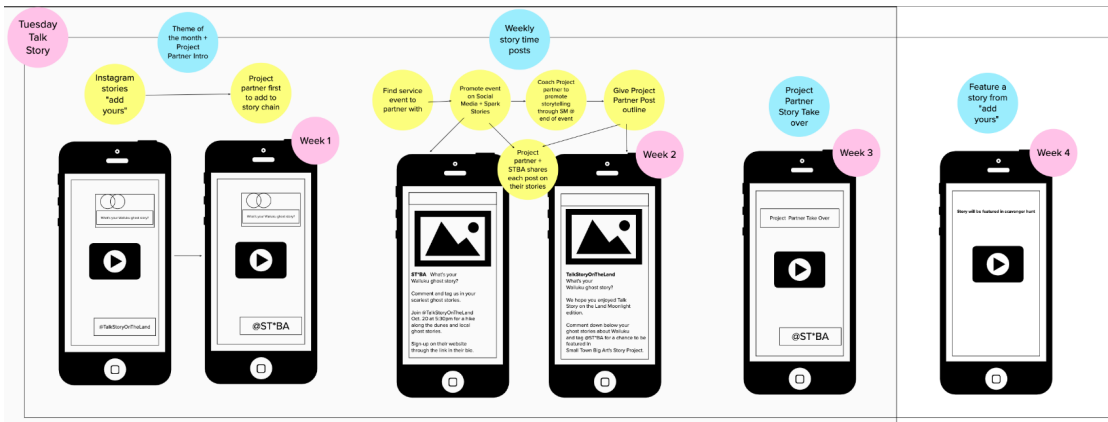


Figure 2. First round lo-fidelity prototype

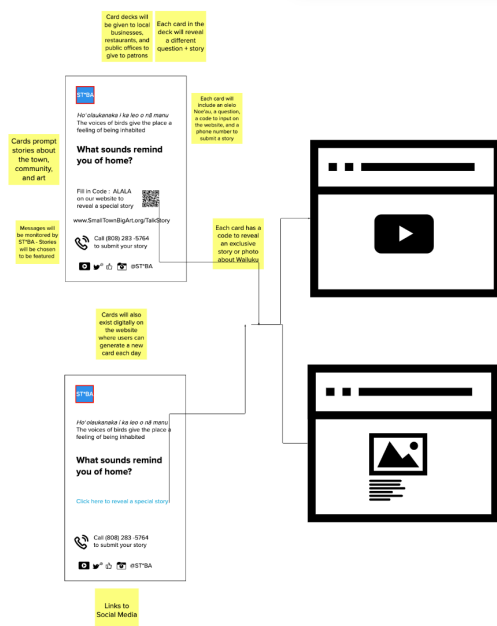


Figure 3. First round lo-fidelity prototype

Wailuku community members provided feedback on low-fidelity prototypes. Based on feedback from this early testing, the team narrowed the design to include a more streamlined storytelling experience, while retaining the best elements of the early

design. After refinement, the team tested the mid-fidelity prototype with Wailuku residents to obtain additional feedback. The team designed physical cards from which users would launch a digital storytelling experience. Technical development was handed off to Ball State University's Digital Corps team. Digital Corps received requirements for the project and delivered a high-fidelity prototype for final testing while the team was on site in Wailuku.

Small Town Big Stories

Small Town Big Stories is an interactive storytelling experience involving physical and digital cards with different prompts that include storytelling questions, listening to stories, sharing stories, and visiting local places. The experience relates to the following values vital to the people of Wailuku: diversity, legacy, tradition, protection, hope, kuleana (responsibility), and belonging. The following physical cards were distributed at locations in Wailuku.

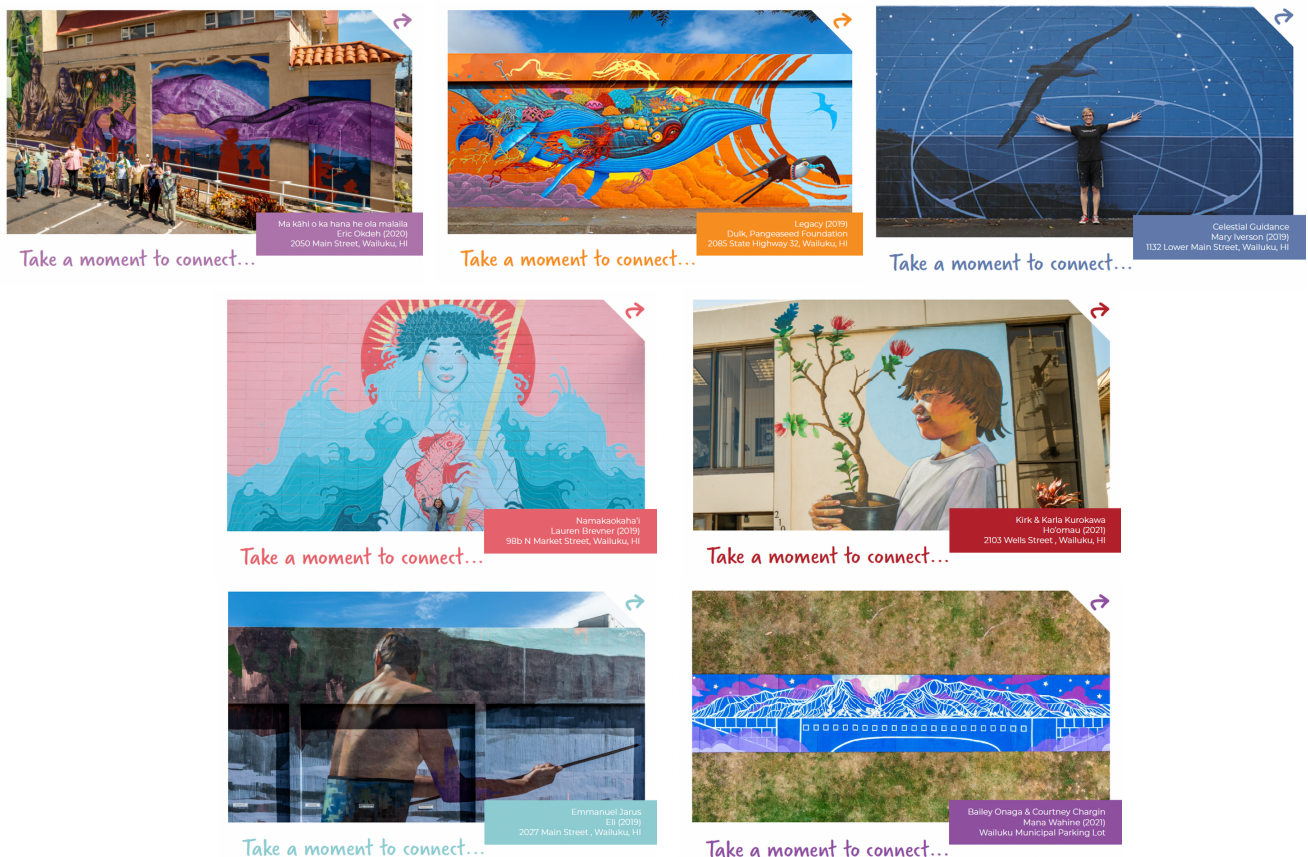


Figure 4. Printed card distributed in Wailuku

A limited edition 8th physical card, featuring original artwork by one of the design team members, was distributed at a community presentation that introduced the experience as a soft launch prior to final testing.

To promote the experience and help users get started, the team produced an instructional video as well as a promotional video. The team also presented to the community at 'Īao Theater in Wailuku as a soft launch prior to the final testing phase. The team engaged in publicity interviews, and the Maui Times wrote a story about the event. The project web page <https://www.smalltownbig.org/stories> is part of the Small Town * Big Art website. This page provides information about the project and the process used to create the Small Town Big Stories experience, a link to the video that introduces our team and the process, blog posts, and a podcast episode.



Figure 5. 8th card design illustrated by Frank E Sanabria

**Small Town
Big Stories**

Let's Talk Story!

Small Town * Big Stories... is coming soon!

Stories bring people together, and everyone has a story to tell.

Look for more cards similar to this one coming soon to Wailuku in May.

Find the QR codes for an interactive story experience.

I ho`okāhi ka umauma, ho`okāhi ke aloha

All united in harmony and love

To learn more about this project, visit www.smalltownbig.org/smalltownbigstories

Four Maui residents participated in user testing of the low-fidelity prototypes that our team developed. Two of the user tests were performed in person and two user tests were performed over Zoom. Individuals who participated in the low-fidelity user testing saw the concept of our prototype with an explanation of the activity and a walkthrough of the different steps and tasks, ending with follow-up questions to obtain feedback. The testing uncovered the following conclusions:

- The experience and introduction must stress that the purpose of the project is to benefit the community.
- Users love the idea of a modern way to practice long-upheld traditions.
- Users want to hear a story at the same location where the story takes place.



Figure 6. Lo-fidelity testing printed materials

- Users see themselves participating in the activity during dedicated time with their family and friends. Time spent in cafes, family dinners at restaurants, and at home were mentioned as possible high participation times and places.
- Users are reluctant to share stories formally, so the project should focus on generating stories rather than collecting stories. A submission form would allow sharing for those who choose to share their stories.
- Adults are more likely to participate with their childrens' encouragement.
- Sharing stories on personal social media accounts was not popular with the users tested because they said it would appear random, and social media is not as casual as it used to be.

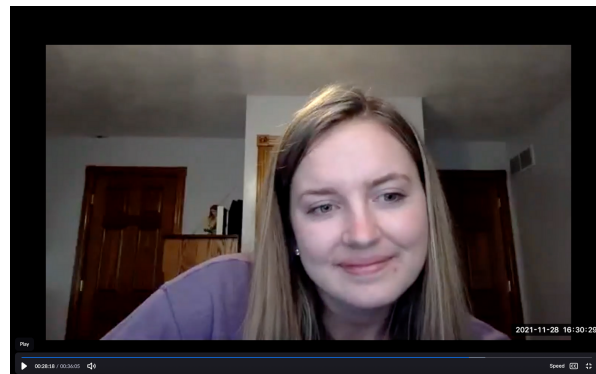


Figure 7. User-Testing with Bailey Onaga, completed by Erin Salyers, Michaela Tangeman, and Ashleigh Goodrich

The team developed a mid-fidelity prototype considering the feedback from low-fidelity testing sessions. Shifting the focus from capturing to generating stories, we developed storytelling prompt cards based on the concepts of conversation starters (Talk), locations (Go), and contribution (Create). With location cards, users travel to a destination to learn more about the place and its history by playing an audio clip and viewing a 360 degree photo. Users could share a story through audio, photos, or writing. In both avenues, participants can see what others have shared before sharing their own story. Users can shuffle and receive a new prompt if wanted. With each activity, the user can share their stories.

Each card included an introduction to the project before the participant scans the QR code and starts the activity. Each card includes a mural image selected for its significance to the value that card represents.

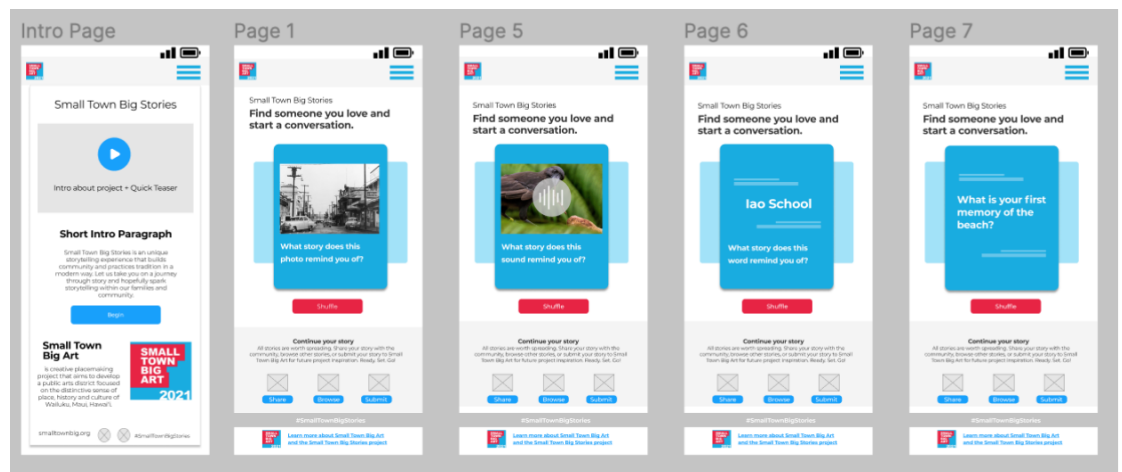


Figure 8. Mid-fidelity prototype via Figma

The cards and the digital experience were updated based on feedback from community members who participated in mid-fidelity usability testing. On site in Wailuku, the team participated in a presentation to the community where they introduced the experience, generated excitement in anticipation of the launch, and distributed the limited edition eighth card. This card was only available at this event and during high-fidelity testing that followed in Wailuku. High-Fidelity prototype testing involved positioning cards at two businesses in Wailuku. Users independently interacted with the cards while team members observed from a distance. Users were then approached and given the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience. Results of this phase of testing were used to further enhance the cards and digital experience.

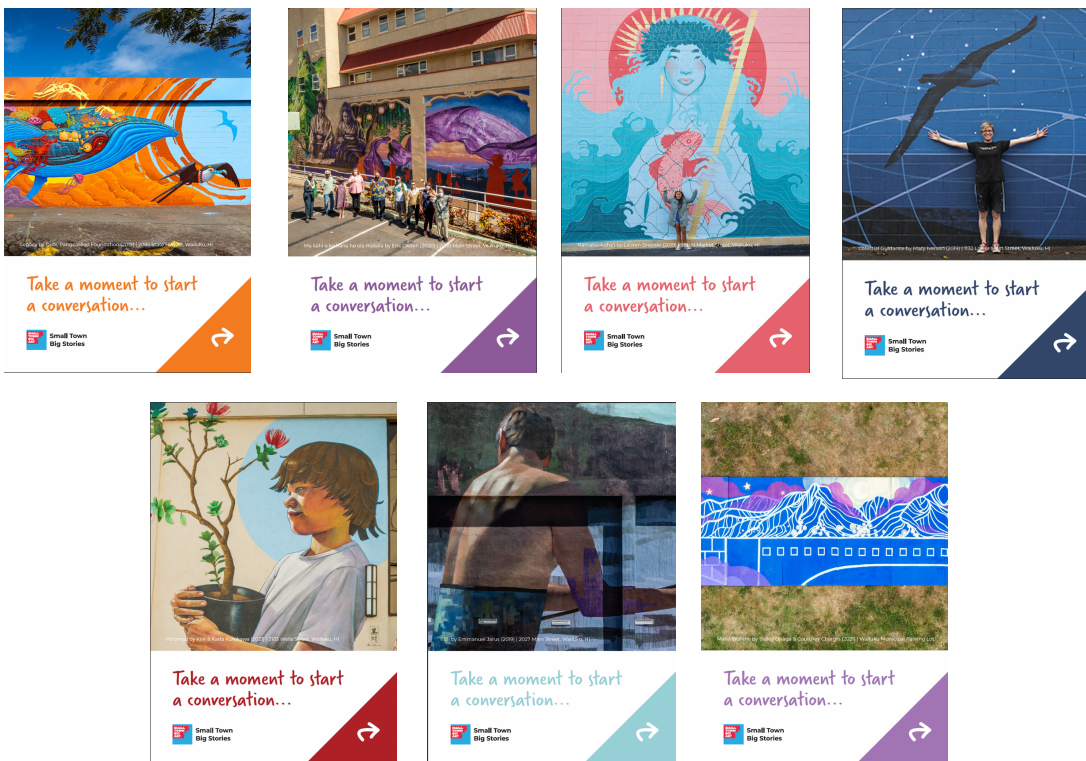


Figure 9. High-Fidelity cards used for final printing in Wailuku

PRESENTATION IN MAUI



Presentation in Maui where the Ball State team presented their project

CREDIT: CHRIS SUGIDONO FOR SMALL TOWN * BIG ART

Team Small Town Big Stories successfully accomplished what we set out to do as defined in our before-action review:

- 1.Task — We will research and build a placemaking project by using different forms of storytelling
- 2.Purpose —to expand the Small Town * Big Art placemaking project for the residents of Wailuku
- 3.Intent — to create an engaging and sustainable community storytelling experience

End State — resulting in a strengthened sense of community, belongingness, and local economic growth.

Project End State

We followed the design thinking process to create an interactive storytelling experience using elements of transmedia storytelling (for example, physical cards, interactive digital app, story recordings, and photos) that encourages users to tell and capture stories. The experience can create a stronger sense of community and belongingness and spur economic growth through involvement with local businesses. Businesses will distribute and promote Small Town Big Stories, while encouraging patrons to visit their location.

What Worked Well?

Since this team was composed of eight people, splitting into subgroups worked well. During the first semester, we typically split into pairs for rapid prototyping. During the second semester, we formed two major groups, one focusing on design and the other on content.

Our team took advantage of several collaboration tools, which worked well. Our primary communication tool was Slack. The team used Mural for brainstorming, co-creation, and prototyping. The team used Trello for tracking deliverables more so early in the project. From an organization standpoint, the team found it helpful to assign roles for planning meeting agendas, taking notes, and distributing action items.

This project was blessed with an engaged and supportive project partner in Small Town * Big Art, and appointing a single partner liaison was ideal. The partner was engaged when needed, but also granted the team creative freedom within the scope of high-level project requirements. Finding a project partner that values the design thinking process is valuable. A highlight of our time with the project partner was bringing them to tears during our solution presentation. The team found it helpful throughout the project to continue revisiting the original project goals and key findings from empathy research.

At the beginning of the project, the team established ground rules and adhered fairly closely to them, which was helpful. From a team perspective, stoke activities at the start of meetings, especially early in the project, were helpful in addition to plus/delta reviews at the end of meetings. Establishing a schedule at the beginning of the project was also helpful for staying on track.

How Can Other Teams Improve?

As the project evolved, the team grew to trust one another's strengths and let go of all eight team members owning all aspects of the project. The team's productivity would have been even better had we garnered this trust earlier in the project. Keeping teams to strictly low residency or on campus instead of combining would have helped with this trust earlier since cohort members come to know one another earlier in the program. Also more completely including on campus members in the initial workshop could have helped build that trust and team camaraderie earlier.

This team experienced obstacles and missed expectations when working with some outside vendors. The project required coordinating with print vendors and Ball State Digital Corps to create deliverables. When working with organizations outside the project team, it is vital to set clear and preferably documented expectations including detailed requirements and timelines.

This project involved working with a distant community, so visiting was an important element. This step required travel expenses. Some of the project deliverables also involved printing, which also carried a cost. The team felt that knowing up front about possible expenses and providing funding options early would have helped with planning.

At the end of the project, the team finalized deliverables, distributed physical cards to Wailuku businesses, and provided social media content to encourage community interaction with the experience. The team provided Small Town * Big Art with the back end solution for the digital experience with instructions for system administration and updating the content for future versions of the experience.



Figure 10. Social media and marketing materials for final project created by ST*BA

Kanani DeCoite

A local teen that loves waterfalls and adventures



18 years old, oldest of 5 kids
Grew up in Waikapu
Currently lives in Wailuku
Junior at Baldwin High School

Extrovert

Introvert

LIKES CREATIVE WRITING

LIKES TO PLAY SOCCER

LOVES TO PLAY VOLLEYBALL

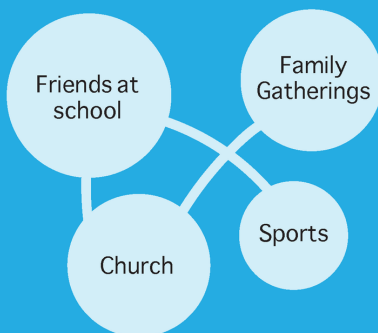
GOES TO CHURCH

KEEPS UP WITH TRENDS

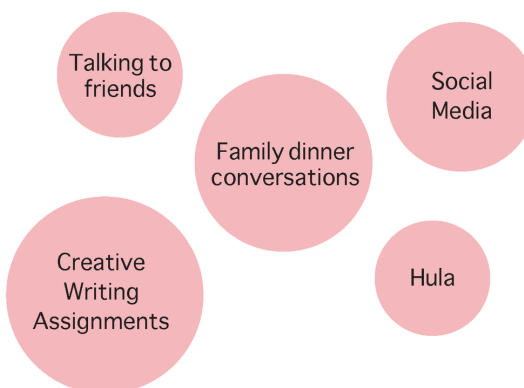
WANTS/NEEDS/GOALS

- Graduate high school with honors
- Get into her dream school - UC Berkley
- Would like to get more in touch with her roots

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



STORYTELLING PREFERENCES



Appendix 1. Persona: Kanani DeCoite

Sarah Akana

A mother of two who wants more opportunities to be a part of the community



32 years old, mother of two
Grew up in Wailuku
Currently lives in Wailuku
Dance/Hula Instructor

Extrovert

Introvert

PASSIONATE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

LOVES HER FAMILY

TAKES KIDS TO ULULANI'S SHAVE ICE

RESPECTS KAPUNA

CELEBRATES HER HISTORY AND CULTURE

WANTS/NEEDS/GOALS

- Involvement opportunities for kids
- Wants fresh ideas in the community
- Wants her town to have a cool aesthetic
- Work to end homelessness

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



STORYTELLING PREFERENCES

Interactive & In-person

Oral Storytelling

Dance & Hula

Community Gatherings

Appendix 1. Persona: Sarah Akana

Madison Kawahara

A business owner who owns a cafe on Main St. in Wailuku



40 years old, married, no kids
Currently lives in Wailuku
Business owner

Extrovert ————— Introvert

LIKES THE SHIFT FROM TOURISM TO CITIZENS

LOVES LOCAL MURALS

VALUES BUILDING COMMUNITY

GOES TO IAO TO CLEAR HER HEAD

EATS SPAM MUSUBI FOR BREAKFAST WHEN SHE IS RUNNING LATE

WANTS/NEEDS/GOALS

- Frustrated by COVID's effect on the community
- Wants to purchase mural prints
- Wants to use her marketing skills
- Hates hitting all of the red lights going into Wailuku

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Local Businesses

Community Gathering Space

Events Similar to First Fridays

STORYTELLING PREFERENCES

Involve Youth

Social Media

The Stories of Tattoos

First Fridays

Themed Dinners

Appendix 1. Persona: Madison Kawahara

Brenda Ing

A young artist who has recently returned to the island after school



24 years old, single, no kids
Currently lives in Wailuku
Graphic Designer

Extrovert ————— Introvert

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Community Art Events

Small, Local Coffee Shop

Social Media

DOES NOT SUPPORT TOURISM PROJECTS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY FIRST INITIATIVES

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

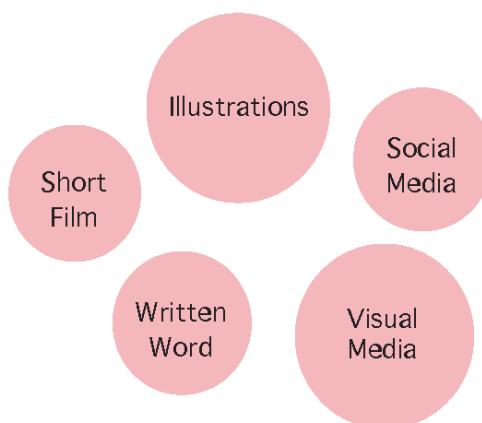
INSPIRED BY ARTISTIC GROWTH

FAMILY

WANTS/NEEDS/GOALS

- Affordable housing
- Frustrated by tourism industry
- Wants a place to hang out with fellow creatives
- More public art
- Encourage Hawaiians to stay on the island

STORYTELLING PREFERENCES



Appendix 1. Persona: Kanani DeCoite